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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 001939

SIPDIS
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EO 12958 DECL: 07/25/2018
TAGS PGOV, PREL, PINR, UK
SUBJECT: A POLITICAL BODY BLOW TO GORDON BROWN AS LABOUR
LOSES SCOTTISH BY-ELECTION
REF: LONDON 1913

Classified By: Political Counselor Rick Mills for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) Summary. The Scottish National Party's 365 vote victory in yesterday's Glasgow East by-election over Labour is another body blow to Gordon Brown's Labour Party.
A Political Earthquake

2. (U) In what the winning Scottish National Party candidate called a "political earthquake," Labour went down to an unanticipated defeat in yesterday's Glasgow East by-election.

3. (C) Forsaking its traditional soapbox issue of Scottish independence, SNP leader and Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond personally spearheaded the campaign.
The Winners

4. (C) The winner in yesterday's election is clearly the SNP. The vote is an enormous boost for the party and its leader, Alex Salmond, who stated that the party would now focus on Scotland's independence.

5. (C) The other winner the morning after are the Conservatives, despite their third place finish. The Conservatives are pleased to have done well in the election.
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government action. Many Conservatives thought making the speech in the district was a mistake, but it appears not to have harmed the Conservative Party's chances.

What's Next for Gordon Brown?

6. (C) Nick Brown, Labour's Deputy Chief Whip, told Poloff that Gordon Brown will use the summer months to "hunker down" and keep his party alive.

7. (C) Nick Brown acknowledged that many Labour members were hoping that an election victory in the Glasgow by-election, no matter how narrow, would boost the party's morale.
Comment

8. (C/NF) With Parliament on recess until October 6, Labour will have time for "long and hard" reflection. Attention now turns to the September 11th anniversary.
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